

BATTLE FLEET READY

Men Are Happy at Prospect of Long Cruise.

WILL SHOW NAVAL NEEDS

Trip Regarded as Certain to Develop Defects in Training and Equipment—No Fleet of Such a Size Has Ever Before Made Such a Voyage, Declared President Roosevelt.

FLEET SUPPLIES.

Coal.....	120,000 tons
Cost of coal.....	\$1,200,000
Flour for the cruise.....	1,200,000 lbs.
Beef (fresh and tinned).....	1,000,000 lbs.
Ham.....	400,000 lbs.
Tinned meats (other than beef).....	200,000 lbs.
Salt pork.....	200,000 lbs.
Sausage.....	100,000 lbs.
Powder.....	75,000 lbs.
Mutton.....	50,000 lbs.
Lard.....	50,000 lbs.
Butter.....	70,000 lbs.
Butter.....	70,000 lbs.
Fruits (dried and preserved).....	300,000 lbs.
Coffee.....	100,000 lbs.
Tea.....	3,000 lbs.
Fresh eggs.....	24,000 doz.
Tinned vegetables.....	446,000 lbs.
Onions.....	56,000 lbs.
Rice.....	55,000 lbs.
Soap.....	65,000 lbs.
Tobacco.....	12,000 lbs.

The fleet which leaves Hampton Roads tomorrow on its 16,000-mile trip to the Pacific Coast has been officially designated by President Roosevelt as the "Battle Fleet."

It is the first time in the history of the United States that the term "Battle Fleet" has been used in time of peace. This is not because the fleet is going out to give battle, but because it would give battle if circumstances demanded such action.

The ostensible purpose, and the only purpose so far as has been given out and so far as the naval officers of the fleet know, of the cruise is for practice. That means the solution of problems of long-continued seamanship in concert, of supplying a great fleet with coal and provisions in out of the way places, and of target shooting.

Will Show Our Needs.

The President has said that the cruise to the Pacific will show what the needs of the navy are. It will bring out the defects in training and equipment, and the best means of correcting them will then be a matter for the Navy Department and Congress to deal with.

The President has declared that "it will be of very great educational use to all engaged in it."

No matter what the real destination of the fleet may be, the naval importance of the movement may be summed up in these words of the President, from his recent annual message: "No fleet of such size has ever made such a voyage."

Statistics of Fleet.

Here are some salient facts concerning the ships and the cruise. The tonnage of the sixteen battle ships will be in round numbers 223,000. There will be about 14,000 men—officers, sailors, and marines—on board.

No less than 25 modern guns will be on the ships, from the monster 13-inch size which hurl projectiles weighing 1,320 pounds, down to the one-pounders and other machine guns that shoot ammunition. The most powerful weapons on the fleet will be the 12-inch guns, of which there will be 14.

These guns shoot projectiles weighing 870 pounds, with a muzzle energy of 2,700 feet a second and a muzzle velocity of 44,000 feet per second; that is, a power that could lift 44,000 tons one foot. Although smaller than the 13-inch guns, they have greater destructive force.

The length of the voyage will be 13,772 miles; and it is expected that 15 days will be occupied in making the trip. Of these 15 days will be spent in port replenishing supplies and giving shore leave.

Nearly 120,000 tons of coal will be consumed, and the cost of it approximates \$1,200,000. Each ship will carry about 2,000 tons of supplies, varying from ammunition to the smallest thing necessary for the larder.

The cruising speed will be about ten and a half knots. It is probable that the ships will go in single file most of the way and that no evolutions or maneuvers will be tried in order to economize on coal. The ships will be at intervals of 400 yards, and in fair weather, storm, or fog that interval will be kept rigorously.

Under no circumstances will the fleet scatter. It must be kept together compactly, so as to practice what Charles H. Cramp, the shipbuilder, once said was the greatest need of our navy—battle ship seamanship.

Only five stops will be made on the way to San Francisco. The first will be at the Port of Spain, Trinidad; the second at Rio de Janeiro; the third at Punta Arenas, in the Straits of Magellan; the fourth at Callao, Peru; and the fifth at Magdalena Bay, in Lower California.

Five days each will be spent at Trinidad and Punta Arenas, and ten days each at Rio de Janeiro and Callao. Thirty days will be spent in Magdalena Bay for target practice.

After that the ships will go to San Francisco, and then the problem of what to do with them, whether to bring them back in the same way or by way of Europe, leaving a large part of them in the Philippines, will probably be announced. The President in his message intimated that they might be brought back to the Atlantic coast by way of South America, and that cruises such as this, from one coast to the other, should be the regular thing hereafter at least once in two years, if not often.

Previous Gatherings of Warships. While it is true that "no fleet of such size has ever made such a voyage," it is not the largest fleet of battle ships ever assembled for evolution. It is the largest and strongest American fleet.

Only last fall Great Britain assembled no less than twenty-six modern battle ships and twenty armored cruisers for maneuvers in home waters. At Oyster Bay a year ago there were thirty-one American war ships of all kinds in the great review. At the opening of the Jamestown Exposition last April there were assembled for the President to review fifty-two war ships, counting the foreigners, and forty-three of them flew the Stars and Stripes.

But no American fleet has had the homogeneity of the one Admiral Evans is to take around South America. It is composed exclusively of heavy fighters, the bulldozers. If naval dogs of war can be so designated.

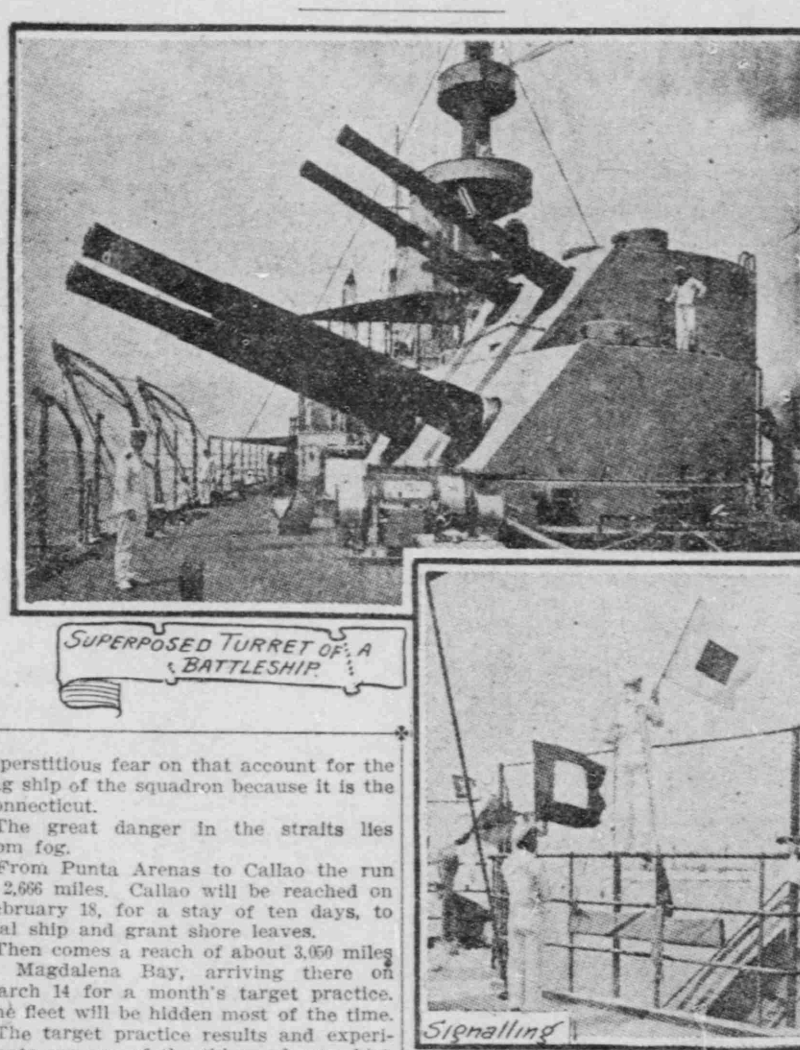
The four other ships that go along do not count, because two of them are strictly supply ships, one is a repair ship, and the other is known as a tender. Their

HOW JACKIES WILL SPEND THEIR TIME.



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DECK OF AN AMERICAN WAR SHIP.



SUPERPOSED TURRET OF A BATTLESHIP.

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known as fire control. This means the method employed to get the exact range of an enemy's ships and to insure the discharge of the guns at exactly the right instant to hit the enemy.

This matter of securing the range is the greatest preliminary problem of battle. Range finders are used in all our forts with absolute accuracy. They have been used on ships with good results, but there are defects in their work, owing to the delicate nature of the instruments, and the limited base of operation, and other measures are being devised in the navy to secure the ranges and the discharge of weapons at exactly the right instant.

The officers of the American navy have worked out the problem and it will be put to the severest test during this cruise.

It is because this is to be the greatest cruise ever undertaken that digression is made again into the realm of statistics. Various estimates have been printed of the amount of supplies needed for the cruise. None of them is official.

The officers of one ship have ordered no less than 50,000 cigars for personal use to be put on board. That supply will last fully a year.

Uncle Sam no longer allows the sailors so much for their food and permits them to buy their own supplies. He now pays for everything and feeds them mighty well.

Even the menus of all the messes of the Jack Tars are submitted to the admiral. He sees to it that the best of wholesome food is provided for the men on all the boats.

The officers get a small allowance, about 50 cents a day, for their food. They take that sum and then provide their own eatables.

The launches soon came dashing to the floats in the rain, and by 10 o'clock all the belated officers were back on their ships and in appropriate costumes.

The clouds lifted at noon. Women came down from their rooms, fresh and ready to say the words they may have forgotten to say last night. Soon the Chamberlin's corridors and observation parlors were filled. The women dominated everything. There were ship talk, dance talk, reunion talk—in fact, every kind of small talk that such a gathering might be expected to bring forth. For gaiety was the dominant note. One of Admiral Evans' staff summed it up in this way:

"Praise for Brave Women."

"This happy scene is just like laughter at a funeral. These women will say good-bye with smiles and will show their nerve by waving hands and kerchiefs bravely, but two minutes after the fleet starts the tears will be rolling down their cheeks. Ten minutes later the corridors of this hotel will be deserted, and upstairs there will be pillows drenched, and the one prayer will be, 'Bring him back safely.'"

"They are true good fellows, these women. God bless them," is already on the lips of every man in the fleet."

The storm has caused the general reception that Admiral and Mrs. Evans were to give to-night on the flagship Connecticut to be called off. On every ship, however, there will be dinner parties. In some of the wardrooms the captains will dine with the guests of the other officers as a special mark of consideration.

There also will be dinner parties at the Chamberlin and the army post here. Admiral Evans has remained on shore all day and has been holding a continuous levee in the hotel. He had the satisfaction of sending a dispatch yesterday to the Secretary of the Navy saying that the fleet was ready to start on an instant's notice, thereby confounding those who had declared that it would be impossible to have all the ships prepared fully by December 15, the day of starting.

Jackies Play Football. Jack had his play ashore this afternoon. The men of the Kansas and Vermont fought the football championship of the fleet in the presence of thousands. Kansas won by a score of 4 to 2, on a field behind the ramparts of Fort Monroe, that made the game look like a contest in water polo.

After the game the victors and vanquished, each headed by their ship's band and young officers, and followed by the first class men of each ship on shore, marched down to the Chamberlin to cheer the admiral and receive a rousing demonstration from the thousands there. The Vermont's men were in the rear, but they cheered their opponents vigorously.

Their mascot goat, made conspicuous by his green bordered blanket, made a dash to chew up one of the Kansas' sunflower flags, but he was caught in time. The Jack tars showed their enthusiasm for the cruise by hurrying aboard their ships.

"We won't have a dozen deserters in the entire fleet," said a captain who was returning from the football game. "The same spirit shown on that field is what is animating the men on ship. If there's any trouble ahead they want to be there."

The Game of Love and War. To-night there is nothing but gaiety ashore and afloat. The vessels are all brightly lighted, red and white signals are being flashed from ship to ship, little launches are dashing in and out, piping their shrill whistles, and far down in hotel corridors soft eyes look into softer eyes, strong hands steal surreptitiously about those more slender, and the old game of love and war is being played again as it has been played for hundreds of years, when men have gone away clad in the habits of conflict.

DENY BRYCE WILL RETIRE. London Papers Point Out That He Has Not Asked for Leave.

London, Dec. 14.—The papers to-night print emphatic denials of the report from Washington that Right Hon. James Bryce, the British Ambassador to the United States, may be retired in the near future.

It is pointed out that the Ambassador will reach the age limit next year, and while it is possible that the time will be extended, yet such action is rarely taken by the British government.

It is also announced that he has not applied for leave of absence. This is quite true, but there is no reason to alter the statement regarding the matter in these dispatches a week ago. Public discussion of the report may possibly cause some change in the plan then suggested, but up to the present there has been no modification.

BUYS HATS FOR EMPRESS. German Ruler Wants Only Large Ones with Ostrich Feathers.

London, Dec. 14.—According to unanimous opinion the Kaiser reached further heights of temperance and courage than ever before penetrated when he bought the Empress a collection of hats on the eve of his departure from London.

He insisted that all should be large and that there should be ostrich feathers in each of them, but he sternly drew the line at osprey plumes, which was a delicate compliment to Queen Alexandra, whose crusade against the cruelty involved in procuring this article of adornment has willingly banished ospreys from English society.

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MEN'S BATH SLIPPERS—Soft and durable; made of Crash, in Red, Blue, and Purple; made and regular cut, at 50c.

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Ladies' Hand-made Crochet Slippers, in all shades; also soft Kidskin Point Slippers, at 75c 50c

Ladies' Felt Sole Slippers, Leather Sole Cloth Slippers, in gray, brown, blue, red, and black; also Kid Slippers and Crash Bath Slippers; all colors, at 50c

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